

Message Text

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SUBJ: OPENING OF VIII TRADE UNION CONGRESS -- STRONG WORDS AND
PROMISES

1. SUMMARY. THE VIII TRADE UNION CONGRESS OPENED IN
WARSAW ON

DECEMBER 6 WITH A KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY PZPR FIRST SECRETARY GIEREK
AND A REPORT DELIVERED BY CHAIRMAN OF THE CENTRAL BOARD OF TRADE
UNIONS WLADYSLAW KRUCZEK. BOTH ADMITTED THAT THE POLISH ECONOMY
FACES SERIOUS PROBLEMS, BUT STRESSED THAT BY STRIVING TO ACHIEVE
THE GOALS OF THE 1976-80 ECONOMIC PLAN, THESE PROBLEMS COULD BE
OVERCOME AND A STEADY RISE IN THE STANDARD OF LIVING GUARANTEED.
BOTH HAD HARSH WORDS FOR CRITICS OF POLAND'S ECONOMIC POLICIES
AND EMPHASIZED THAT THE PRIMARY TASK NOW FACING THE TRADE UNIONS
IS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR CONTROL OVER THE WORKERS, ESPECIALLY AT
THE FACTORY LEVEL. THE ROLE OF THE PZPR IN ACHIEVING IMPROVEMENTS
IN PAY, WORKING CONDITIONS, AND SERVICES WAS REPEATEDLY UNDERLINED,
AND GIEREK ANNOUNCED INCREASES IN MINIMUM WAGES, ANNUITIES, AND
PENSIONS TO BECOME EFFECTIVE ON MAY 1, 1977. END SUMMARY.

2. PZPR FIRST SECRETARY EDWARD GIEREK DELIVERED THE KEYNOTE

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SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE EIGHTH TRADE UNION CONGRESS IN WAR-

SAW ON DECEMBER 6. GIEREK PRAISED THE WORK OF THE TRADE UNIONS AND LISTED THE ACTIONS OF THE PZPR OVER THE PAST YEAR IN THE FIELDS OF WAGES, WORKING CONDITIONS, AND SERVICES TO REWARD THOSE EFFORTS. HE TOOK PARTICULAR NOTE OF THE CODIFICATION OF WORKERS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE LABOR CODE, WHICH OCCURRED TWO YEARS AGO.

3. GIEREK ANNOUNCED PLANS TO INCREASE MINIMUM WAGES, PENSIONS, AND ANNUITIES BEGINNING MAY 1, 1977. HE STATED THAT THE PLAN, WHICH WAS WORKED OUT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE CENTRAL BOARD OF TRADE UNIONS, CALLS FOR MINIMUM MONTHLY LEVELS BY 1980 OF 1,800 ZLOTYS FOR PENSIONS, 1,750 ZLOTYS FOR DISABILITY PENSIONS IN GROUPS I AND II, AND 1,400 ZLOTYS FOR FAMILY ANNUITIES. THE FIRST RAISE IN THE MINIMUM WAGE, TO OCCUR MAY 1, WILL AMOUNT TO 200 ZLOTYS, THUS RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE TO 1,400 ZLOTYS PER MONTH. GIEREK COMMENTED THAT THIS PROJECT WILL REQUIRE A SERIOUS FINANCIAL EFFORT AND WILL COST THE GOVERNMENT SOME FOUR BILLION ZLOTYS IN 1977.

4. THE FIRST SECRETARY THEN TURNED HIS ATTENTION TO THE PROJECTED SOCIAL-ECONOMIC PLANS FOR 1976-80 AND FOR 1977, RECENTLY SUBMITTED TO THE SEJM: "THE PROJECT PLANS WERE GEARED TO PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES AND ENVISAGE A REGROUPING OF FORCES AND MEANS, INVESTMENTS AMONG OTHERS, WHICH WILL PERMIT THE REALIZATION OF THE SOCIAL-ECONOMIC TASKS OF THE PRESENT DECADE, WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY MORE RAPIDLY ELIMINATING THE MARKET DIFFICULTIES WHICH ARE SORELY FELT BY WORKING PEOPLE."

5. GIEREK REMINDED THE TRADE UNIONISTS OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES IN IMPLEMENTING THE PARTY'S PROGRAM AND IN INCREASING WORK PRODUCTIVITY AND QUALITY. HE HAD HARSH WORDS FOR THOSE "...WHO ATTEMPT TO DESTROY THE STRENGTH OF THE NATION, TO LOWER ITS PRESTIGE," AND, IN HIS STRONGEST REMARKS, CONCERNING DISCONTENTED WORKERS, HE ADMONISHED THE TRADE UNIONISTS, "IN OUR SOCIAL LIFE, IN FACTORIES, INSTITUTIONS, AND OFFICES, WE STILL MEET WITH MANY NEGATIVE MANIFESTATIONS AND BAD HABITS. IN FIGHTING THEM, YOU WILL HAVE RELIABLE SUPPORT IN OUR PARTY. WE CANNOT, AND WE WILL NOT, TOLERATE THAT WHICH IS NOT IN AGREEMENT WITH THE IDEALS OF OUR ORDER."

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6. IN HIS REPORT, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CENTRAL BOARD OF TRADE UNIONS, WLADYSLAW KRUCZEK, UNDERLINED AND AMPLIFIED THE POINTS MADE BY GIEREK. HE STRESSED THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF THE UNIONS IN THE AREAS OF CONTROL AND OVERSIGHT OF WORKERS, ESPECIALLY IN SITUATIONS WHICH PLACE WORKERS AT ODDS WITH MANAGEMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT. IN PREACHING AVOIDANCE OF CONFLICT, KRUCZEK SAID THE UNIONS SHOULD RELY ON ALREADY EXISTING LEGAL MECHANISMS FOR ARBITRATION. ECHOING GIEREK, KRUCZEK ATTEMPTED

TO WIELD THE LABOR CODE AS A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD, WHICH, WHILE GUARANTEEING WORKERS' RIGHTS, AT THE SAME TIME IMPOSES RESPONSIBILITIES UPON THEM. HE PLACED SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE NECESSITY FOR THE TRADE UNIONS TO WIN THE TRUST OF THE WORKERS.

7. FOLLOWING GIEREK'S RELATIVELY MILD LEAD, KRUCZEK ATTACKED CRITICS BY SAYING, "WE DO NOT HIDE DIFFICULTIES, WE SPEAK OF THEM OPENLY. THE PARTY WILL SHOW THE REAL AND ONLY PROPER ROAD TO OVERCOMING THEM..." HE SPOKE OF BOTH FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC CRITICS WHO WERE TRYING TO USE POLAND'S DIFFICULTIES FOR THEIR OWN BENEFIT. THESE CRITICS, HE SAID, "PRESENT (THE DIFFICULTIES) IN A FALSE MANNER AND TENDENTIOUSLY INTERPRET THE EVENTS WHICH OCCURRED IN RADOM AND URSUS IN JUNE OF THIS YEAR." ADOPTING THE PHRASEOLOGY USED BY GIEREK IN OCTOBER IN HIS KATOWICE ADDRESS, KRUCZEK CONTINUED "THESE ANTI-POLISH AND ANTI-SOCIALIST FORCES ARE TODAY ASSUMING THE TOGA OF WOULD-BE DEFENDERS OF THE POLISH WORKING CLASS. THIS IS NOT A NEW PRACTICE, AND THESE ARE NOT NEW PEOPLE."

8. KRUCZEK APPEALED FOR SUPPORT FOR THE 1976-80 ECONOMIC PLAN. BY DEFENDING THE POLISH WORKING CLASS FROM MALICIOUS CRITICS AND DANGEROUS DOMESTIC ELEMENTS AND BY WORKING TO THE FULL EXTENT OF THEIR ABILITIES, THE WORKERS CAN GUARANTEE A CONTINUED RISE IN THE STANDARDS OF LIVING.

9. KRUCZEK CONCLUDED HIS REPORT WITH LAVISH PRAISE OF THE USSR AND SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL WORKER SOLIDARITY, THE PRINCIPLES OF THE HELSINKI ACCORDS, AND THE WARSAW PACT PROPOSAL FOR AN AGREEMENT ON NON-FIRST USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

10. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE LINE ADOPTED BY GIEREK, AND TO A GREATER DEGREE BY KRUCZEK, IS A TOUGH ONE, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE PZPR IS NOW IN A POSITION TO TAKE OFF THE VELVET GLOVE IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ITS RELATIONS WITH THE POLISH WORKING FORCES. KRUCZEK MAY NOT LAST MUCH LONGER AS CHAIRMAN OF THE CENTRAL BOARD OF TRADE UNIONS. WHILE DURING THE FIFTH PLENUM ON DECEMBER 1-2 THERE WAS NO TALK OF HIS REMOVAL, THE WARSAW RUMOR MILL ON DECEMBER 6 BEGAN TO SUGGEST THAT KRUCZEK'S DAYS ARE NUMBERED. HIS PERFORMANCE ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE EIGHTH TRADE UNION CONGRESS WAS CRITICIZED AS BEING THAT OF AN OLD MAN (KRUCZEK IS 66). THE GUESSING GAME REVOLVES AROUND WHO MIGHT BE CALLED IN AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR TO TAKE KRUCZEK'S PLACE; INTEREST NOW CENTERS ON POLITBIURO MEMBER JOZEF TEJCHMA. END COMMENT.
DAVIES

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